

# Dear Padre,

## Why did early Christians begin celebrating Christmas on December 25th?

Placing Christmas near the winter solstice can be traced to pagan celebrations in Christianity's early years. The celebration of Christmas in December began in Rome as a Christian response to a civil festival honoring the sun god Sol.

The Romans celebrated the sun climbing into the northern skies, signaling the lengthening days after the cold winter nights. On December 25, 274, Aurelian proclaimed the sun god principal patron of the empire. Christmas originated when this sun cult was strongest. Christians wouldn't go to the temple to pay homage to a sun god. They believed in the one true God, and God's only son made human, Jesus Christ.

It's almost as if Christians substituted "son" for "sun" and celebrated the birth of the son of justice into this world. The parallels are uncanny. As the extending sunlight broke night's grip and softened the cold sting on the world, so Jesus' coming broke the long reign of sin and darkness. Jesus was the true son, the light and life of the world, the reason for renewed hope.

Narrow fundamentalists fail to understand that Christmas is more than a birthday celebration of the *day* Christ was born. It's wider in scope, celebrating the reality that Jesus was born human. It's not the *when* but the *what* that we celebrate. So, Jesus' precise birthdate doesn't matter. What matters is that Jesus was truly born human—like us in all things but sin. For this we celebrate.

—Fr. Joseph Morin, CSsR  
Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org



PSYNDICO/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Calendar

**Monday**  
DECEMBER 23  
Advent Weekday  
Mal 3:1–4, 23–24  
Lk 1:57–66

**Tuesday**  
DECEMBER 24  
Advent Weekday  
Sir 35:1–12  
Mk 10:28–31

**Wednesday**  
DECEMBER 25  
Christmas  
Is 52:7–10  
Heb 1:1–6  
Jn 1:1–18 or  
Jn 1:1–5, 9–14

**Thursday**  
DECEMBER 26  
St. Stephen,  
First Martyr  
Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–59  
Mt 10:17–22

**Friday**  
DECEMBER 27  
St. John,  
Apostle and Evangelist  
1 Jn 1:1–4  
Jn 20:1a and 2–8

**Saturday**  
DECEMBER 28  
The Holy Innocents,  
Martyrs  
1 Jn 1:5–2:2  
Mt 2:13–18

**Sunday**  
DECEMBER 29  
The Holy Family of  
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph  
Sir 3:2–6, 12–14  
Col 3:12–21 or  
Col 3:12–17  
Mt 2:13–15, 19–23

# Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 22, 2019

Fourth Sunday of Advent (A)

Is 7:10–14  
Rom 1:1–7  
Mt 1:18–24

## He's One of Us

The Incarnation means that God is one of us. He is made of our flesh and blood; he laughs, sings, and loves people. Though we believe he is God, he is still one of us. We can choose him to be on our team, trusting that he will play to win.

When identifying ourselves, we normally tell others what we do. Societies like the one to which Jesus belonged usually identified themselves by tracing ancestry. As Isaiah tells us today, Jesus belonged to the house of David. Paul says that he was of David "according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3). The Gospel identifies Joseph as a "son of David" (Matthew 1:20). Since Jesus was considered Joseph's legal son, he also was a "son of David." Joseph is told that the child will be called Emmanuel, which means "God is with us" (Matthew 1:23). Thus, Incarnation means God is with us in a unique way in this man who is one of us. The Incarnation also gives extraordinary dignity to material creation, of which we are all a part and of which he is a part as well, for he is one of us. In other words, Emmanuel (God with us) is a child of earth.

Like Joseph, we cannot fully comprehend what has happened. We can only stand with him in awe as this wondrous mystery unfolds before us. As we await Christmas, we wait for him to appear. When he comes, we will be amazed to see that he is really one of us.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA



ANNEKA/SHUTTERSTOCK

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us."  
MATTHEW 1:23

## FOR Reflection

- ★ How does knowing that Jesus is one of us make a difference in your life?
- ★ We are on the threshold of Christmas. What religious sentiments fill your mind and heart?



## A WORD FROM Pope Francis

We need, then, to open our hearts to the true light, Jesus Christ. He is the light that can illumine life and turn our darkness into light; the light of goodness that conquers evil; the light of the love that overcomes hatred; the light of the life that triumphs over death.

—ADDRESS TO VATICAN CURIA, DECEMBER 21, 2018



# Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church Saint Terence Mission

1130 East San Antonio Ave  
Many, LA 71449  
Phone: 318-256-5680  
Fax: 318-256-9177

Office Hours: 8AM to 4PM (M-F)  
Website: www.stjohnmany.org  
Email: office@stjohnmany.org  
Pastor: Rev. Francis Kamau, FMH

## Parish Staff

**Deacon:** Michael Sullivan  
**Parish Secretary:** Sheila Royal  
**Office Assistant:** Shirley Rivers  
**DRE:** Jean Rains  
**Groundskeeper:** Michael Beasley  
**Housekeeper:** Pam Little  
**Music Director:** Justin Lincecum

**Prayer List:** Pat & Elaine Martinez, Brenda DeVaney, Timothy D. Rivers, Bessie Mowad, Flavia Pratt, Madison Richards, Bill Andries, Vivian Halleck, Vicki Martin, Margie Remedies, Jackie Miller, Bobby Slaydon, Tammy Wallace, Brayson McLain, Eddie Richard, Janice Murphy, Clifford Shuff, Audrey & Richard Doggett, Daphine Moore, Mark Roberts, Adele Serio, Kathryn McCormick, Allison Brewer, Jerry Riser, Patti Dugan, Wayne Stephensen, Skyler Easterling, Curtis Fissette, Frances Sepulvado, Angela Osborn, Fr Richard Norsworthy, Shayna Tilley, Randy Richter, Janice A Sepulvado, Jimmy Gates, Robbin Meshell, Cassidy Byles, Amelia Dougherty, Baby Jack Edward Duck, Juanita Ford, Bernadette Bitting, Diane Reaux, Joanna Presseau, Kristin Williams Sepulvado, Ron Rivers, Bailey McConnell, Nelda Laffitte, Ricky Gates, Ronnie Salley, Caleb Ezernack, Joan Sneed, Earl Anderson, Vicci Thibodeaux, Joanne Hansen, Evelyn Bouillion, Chris Moran, Tom Hambleton, Cambree Jewell Parrie, Selena Rodriguez, Edan Leone, Bennett King, Andrew Rains, Wanda J Rivers, Keith Festervan, Boone Porche, Murrel Blake, Rapheal Meche, Norma Bergeron, Kaleb Johnson, Ace Bowling, Michael Mancil, Jr., Bailey Leach, Seth Freeman, Joshua Nichols, Dr. Liang Sien Oey, Fr. Ken Williams, Miles Meche, Doyle Henry, Jackie Craig, Ruth Loupe, Linda Metoyer, K.C. Sepulvado, Juanita Ford, Maurice Martinez, Marianna Wilkinson, Lynell Hymel, Billy Sneed & Beckie Bayer

### Faith Formation

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Tuesdays, 6:00PM  
Parish School of Religion, Wednesdays, 5:30PM, Sept. to May.

### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

At St. John's each Wednesday, 8:30AM to 6PM; Sept. - May

### Recitation of the Holy Rosary

Everyone is invited to join us in the recitation of 30PM the holy rosary before weekend masses: Saturdays, 3:30 PM at St. John, Sundays, 7:30 AM at St. Terence and 10:30 AM at St. John.

### Anointing of the Sick /Ministry to the Sick

Please call the church office if someone is in a hospital, nursing home, shut-in, and would like to be visited or receive the sacraments.

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday: 3:00 - 3:45 pm at St. John; Sunday: 7:15-7:45AM at St. Terence; Seasonal Penance Services; and, by appointment

### Sacrament of Baptism

Call the office in advance to register for seminar.

**Funerals** Arrangements may be made by calling the church

### Masses

Anticipated Mass: Saturday, 4:00 PM  
Sunday: 8:00 AM (@ St. Terence)  
11:00 AM (with Children's Liturgy)  
Tuesdays: 5:00 PM  
Wednesday-Friday: 8:00 AM  
First Saturdays: 8AM

### Las Lecturas de Hoy

22nd Diciembre

Isaias 35: 7: 10-14

Salmo 23

Romanos I: 1-7

San Mateo I: 18-24

Misa en español el primer domingo de cada mes a las 5PM; Confesiones a las 4PM

### Mission Statement

We, the people of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and St Terence Mission, in union with the Holy Father and our Bishop, being filled with the Holy Spirit, strive to promote and deepen the Catholic faith in the lives of all who share in our life together. As Disciples, we seek to worship God and find His kingdom among us and in the world around us. Our calling is to proclaim the Kingdom of God through the proclamation of the Word, the celebration of the Eucharist, the Sacramental life, community service, evangelization, and Christian education.

### MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, 12/21/2019

- 4:00PM 1. +Ruth Anderson  
2. Bailey McConnell (SI)  
3. +The Joyce Santos Family  
4. +Chris & Eunice Ebarb  
5. +Ronnie Osborn  
6. +Rusty Canton

Sunday, 12/22/2019

- 8:00AM 1. The Parish Family  
2. Ace Bowling (SI)  
3. Dr. Liang Sien Oey (SI)  
4. Miles Meche (SI)  
5. +Jerry Sonnier  
11:00AM 1. +Deceased Members of the Thomas and Sandy Nguyen Family  
2. +Benny Rivers  
3. Eddie Richard (SI)  
4. +Philip Frlot  
5. +Edith Bayer  
6. Living & Deceased of the Blake, Byrd, Pederson & Wimer Families  
7. +Jessie Miller Blake

Tuesday, 12/24/2019

- 4:00PM 1. +Raymond Remedies  
2. +Robert & Elzado Rivers  
3. +Billy Ezernack

12 Midnight, 12/24/2019

1. +Doris & Yulee Koss  
2. +Billy Ezernack  
3. +Ernest & Shirley Rodrigues

Wednesday, 12/25/2019

- 8:00AM 1. Living & Deceased Members of the Mary Jo Sullivan Clark Family  
2. +Dickie Martin  
11:00AM 1. +Elzado Rivers  
2. +Peggy Adams

### Parish Support

(Thank you for your generosity!)  
Dec. 14th-15th, 2019

St John	\$ 5310.85	Attendance: 231
St Terence	\$ 1272.00	Attendance: 102

### Mass Notes

There will be no daily Mass on Dec. 26th and 27th. Mass will resume on Saturday, December 28th at 4PM.

Date	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	Altar Servers	Ushers
<b>Christmas Vigil, Tuesday, Dec. 24th, 4PM (St John)</b>	Jean Rains	Syble Gandy Pat Gandy MaKenna McElwee	Masen Starks Juan Plascencia	Leo Springer Johnny Mowad Terry DeLatin Marty Starks
<b>Midnight Mass, Tuesday, Dec. 24th (St John)</b>	JJ Blake	Angelique Mitchell Gwen Koss	Reese Koss Braxton Koss Kaley Koss	Robert Remedies Marion Koss George Koss Peter Koss
<b>Wednesday, Dec. 25th, 8AM (St Terence)</b>	Jan Collins	Carrie DeRouen Pam Little Frank Little		Tom Gatti Earl Anderson
<b>Wednesday, Dec. 25th, 11AM (St John)</b>	Katie Lombardino	Dale Porche Rosie Sullivan	Robert Lombardino	Volunteers Needed
<b>Saturday Vigil, December 28th, 4PM (Saint John)</b>	Mary Murphy	Karen Sepulvado Shirley Veuleman Clauriste Byles	Paul McCormic Emelyn Plascencia	Leo Springer Johnny Mowad Terry DeLatin Dakota Rivers
<b>Sunday, December 29th, 8AM (Saint Terence)</b>	Jeanette Polson	Pam Little Frank Little Rufus Shuff		Harold Bergeron Paul Guidry
<b>Sunday, December 29th, 11AM (Saint John)</b>	JJ Blake	Angelique Mitchell MaKenna McElwee	Emma Dickson Avaree Procell	Marion Koss Michael Beasley Jerry Mitchell George Koss

### Office Schedule

The church office will be closed **December 23rd through January 1st** to concur with the Catholic Center closings for the Christmas holidays. The office will reopen at 8AM on Thursday, January, 2nd.

### Schedule Changes

There will be no CCD, RCIA, nor Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament this week.

### Living Nativity

The children will present "A Living Nativity" prior to the 4PM Christmas Vigil Mass. Please join us.

### Catholic Calendars Available

The 2020 Catholic Calendars are located in the back of the church. If you are able to, we are asking for a \$2.00 donation to help defray printing costs.



### Lessons and Carols

Our choir will host a *Candlelight Lessons and Carols* service this

**Sunday, December 22 at 7PM.** St. John, St. Terence and the First United Methodist Church choirs will participate. Everyone is invited to attend this beautiful service to hear the wonderful story of Christ's birth.

### Message from Father Jim Sichko

To my dear friends and family of St John & St Terence: Thank you so much for the three nights of our Mission! We laughed, we pondered and we reflected! Excellent ways for us to enrich the final days of Advent! Please know of my love and appreciation! I look forward in seeing you again! May I also be one of the first to wish you a Blessed Christmas Season!

Sincerely, Fr. Jim



### Remember in Prayer

We ask that you pray for the repose of the soul of Peggy Adams. *Eternal Rest grant unto her O Lord and Let the Perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in Peace.* Amen.

### Christmas Mass Schedule

**December 24th** Vigil Mass, 4PM  
Midnight Mass  
**December 25th** St Terence, 8AM  
St John, 11AM

### Feast of Mary, Mother of God Holy Day Masses

On January 1st each year, the church celebrates *Mary, Mother of God*, and her motherhood of Jesus Christ. This is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Mass schedule is:

**December 31st,** Vigil Mass, 4PM  
**January 1st** Saint Terence, 8AM  
Saint John, 11AM



### From Father Francis

*I wish all of you Joy, Peace and God's Blessings this Christmas Season and always. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life..."*

Sincerely, Father Francis



### St Terence Christmas Flowers

Saint Terence Mission is still accepting donations for Christmas flowers. Donations of any amount are welcome. If you are interested in contributing, please contact Chris Moran or Glenda Shuff.

### Poinsettia Donations

The Saint John Ladies Altar Society is accepting donations for Poinsettias for the Christmas altar. These may be made in honor of or in memory of a loved one and are \$15 each. If you are interested, please pick up an envelope from the back of the church or come by the office.



### Protecting God's Children

Session is scheduled for the following dates:

**January 8, 2020**

**6PM** at the Catholic Center

All employees and volunteers who work with or are responsible for children, who have not yet done so, are required to attend. Call 868-4441 to register.

### Second Collection: December 24/25 Diocesan Infirm Priests' Fund

The Diocesan Infirm Priests' Fund blesses us with the opportunity to show generous mercy in the care of the priests in our diocese who have so lovingly served us. Please be give generously to this cause.

### Youth Group

Please pray for the members of our Youth Group who are attending the *Alive Again* Annual Winter Retreat at The Pines Catholic Camp in Big Sandy, Texas this weekend.



### Sanctuary Candle

The Sanctuary Candle burns night and day near the tabernacle to indicate and honor the presence of Christ. You may arrange to have the Sanctuary Candle at St. John's or St. Terence burn in memory of a loved one for a week of your choice by contacting the church office. The candle will be booked on a first-come, first-serve basis. Donations of any amount are accepted.

### Mass Intentions

Mass intentions may be requested for the intentions of a person or for the repose of the soul of someone who has died. One must never forget the infinite graces that flow from the Sacrifice of the Mass which benefit one's soul. The customary donation for a mass intention in our Diocese is \$5.00. If you are interested in scheduled masses for an intention, please contact the church office.



### Msgr. Francis I. Malone Ordination Information

Monsignor *Francis I. Malone*, Bishop-elect of the Diocese of Shreveport, will be ordained as the third Bishop of Shreveport on January 28, 2020. Due to an outpouring of enthusiasm from the faithful of our diocese and Bishop-elect Malone's desire to include more of his future flock in this joyous celebration, the site of his ordination to the Episcopacy has been changed and is now scheduled for 2:00 pm on Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> 2020, at the Shreveport Convention Center. We anticipate seating for 2500 people, therefore tickets will not be required. A special reception for our newly ordained bishop will also be held at the Convention Center at the conclusion of the ordination Mass.

Evening Vespers will be conducted on Monday, January 27, 2020 in the Cathedral of St. John Berchmans at 6:00 pm. This will be an opportunity for Bishop-elect Malone to meet and greet members of religious orders and persons from the political community. Additionally, family members and guests of Bishop-elect Malone, visiting bishops and clergy of the Diocese of Shreveport will be in attendance. This service is open to anyone. Tickets will not be required.

### Christmas Offering Envelopes

Special envelopes for Christmas offerings are in the pews and the back of the church. We have many repairs currently in progress in the church and school. Please consider a gift to the church parish to help with these efforts.

### Have you Completed Your Census Form?

We are continuing to update our church census. If you have not yet filled out a form, please pick one up from the back of the church or go to our website. If you do not wish your address and phone number to be published in our church directory, please notify the church office.



### Like Us on Facebook

Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church is now on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsmanyla> Please like our page. You may also visit our website at: [www.stjohnsmanyla.com](http://www.stjohnsmanyla.com)

## Convention of Councils: Continuing the Formation of Parish Leaders

January 11, 2020

Doors Open: 8:00AM

Continental Breakfast: 8:50AM

Lunch: 11:30AM

Dismissal: 2:00PM



**It is important that all pastors, school administrators, council members and leaders attend!**

*"How can I make a return to the Lord for all the good He has done for me?"*

This is the theme for the Convention of Councils, 2020. We can all come together to identify ways and means of "taking up the cup of salvation and making a return to the Lord for all the good He has done for our diocese." How blessed is our Diocese that Bishop-elect is ready to give his flock the motivation to move in that direction? How blessed that the opportunities abound in our diocese as we enter this phase of our journey to salvation? How blessed that the diocesan leadership can come together in anticipation of Bishop-elect Francis Malone's ordination and installation to begin this important work of the Lord. Truly God is good!

The Diocesan Directors and staff will be on hand to offer presentations focusing on their areas of expertise; and more importantly asking how they can better serve the parishes, missions, and schools.

Rather than breakout sessions, our participation together will give us the opportunity for everyone to hear the same information firsthand. There will be plenty of time to ask questions. Even if you feel your questions are only of particular interest to your parish, by all means ask them.

This will be a great time to give all the conventioners a chance in shaping the diocese that will be turned over to Bishop-elect Malone. Our diocese is now over 33 years old. It is a great diocese filled with wonderful, spiritual, well-educated people involved in their community and the lives of their neighbors. Social Justice issues, providing for the less fortunate and not just seeing Christ in the face of others, but also being Christ to others; are all areas of concern for our diocese.

You are the eyes and ears, the hearts and minds that can make things happen! As we are aware that many of our resources, including our families, are moving away and becoming more scarce; this is certainly the time for us to identify the realities and challenges that face us and more importantly the time to discern together the solutions. We are a small diocese but a mighty diocese with our best years yet to come.

Based on what each director wants to share will establish timing elements. We are also asking each group to bring an idea or two that made a difference in your parish or school that you are willing to share at the convention. **COME AND BRAG ABOUT YOUR SUCCESS!!!**

In the afternoon all the directors will be seated at a panel and will entertain questions from the attendees. There will be a special gift for each attendee and various door prizes! There is no fee for registration or lunch.

If you do not have a registration form, please contact the church office to register no later than December 30, 2019. This will be an opportunity to meet Bishop-elect Francis I. Malone.

### Church Directory Picture Make-ups

We appreciate everyone who had their portrait made for the new church directory. If you were not able to do so and are interested in participating, **please call the church office to be placed on a waiting list.** We will be scheduling a "retake" day at a later date if we have enough participants.

### Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

In today's Gospel, we hear that Jesus will be named Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." May each Christmas find us more and more like him: more humble, more holy, more happy and more full of God. ***Your gifts to the Society of St Vincent de Paul helps those who are poor and suffering to find Emmanuel and to know that "God is with us."***

### Contribution Envelopes 2019

Contribution envelopes for 2020 are available for pick-up in the back of the church. If you are currently not receiving church contribution envelopes and would like to, please contact the church office. If you would like a statement for income tax purposes, please use the contribution envelopes. There is no charge for these.



### ACTS Retreat: Saint Michael the Archangel

Saint Michael the Archangel Catholic Church in Leesville will be hosting a Mens's ACTS Retreat on **January 23-26, 2020.** If you are interested, please contact Charles Renz (337) 208-1548 or Drew Chesher (337) 378-2099 for more information.